



## Request for Applications



RFA # 005-PDG-2019

**TITLE:** Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG B-5) Program Performance Evaluation (PPE) Plan

**FUNDING AGENCY:** NC DHHS/Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

**ISSUE DATE:** July 10, 2019

**RECEIPT DEADLINE:** Applications, subject to the following conditions, must be received no later than **5:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 14, 2019.**

**EMAIL an electronic PDF of your application to the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education via this email:** [DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov).

The signature of an authorized official is required on the application face sheet. An electronic signature or an electronic scanned copy of the signed application face sheet will be accepted. **Only electronic application submissions via email will be accepted, i.e., do not mail, fax, or deliver copies of the application to DCDEE's physical or mailing address.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Questions concerning the specifications, or any information contained within this Request for Applications must be received no later than **5:00 p.m., July 17, 2019.** All questions must be received in writing, via email to: [DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov). Responses to all questions received by the deadline will be posted on the Division of Child Development and Early Education website <http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/> no later than **5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 24, 2019.**

**ELIGIBILITY:** This RFA is open to state agencies and universities, public and private nonprofit organizations with a current 501(c)(3) standing with expertise in program evaluation and extensive knowledge of North Carolina's early childhood education mixed delivery system.

**FUNDING AVAILABILITY:** This RFA will be for an anticipated 4 month funding cycle in calendar year 2019. Up to \$100,000 will be available to complete process evaluations of projects completed in year one of the PDG funding, and to prepare a plan for a formative evaluation of the PDG B-5 project that will contribute to continuous quality improvement and monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards PDG B-5 goals and objectives. In addition, the Contractor will assist the State with writing an application for PDG B-5 continuation funding by designing

evaluations for proposed activities (Logic models for Maximizing Parental Choice, Sharing Best Practices, and Improving Overall Quality projects will be included with this RFP.)

DCDEE will determine the actual funding amount based on the proposed execution of the evaluation and the utilization of funds as outlined in the successful applicant's proposal. One award will be made, pending funding availability.

**Preschool Development Grant Funding Source:**

CFDA: 93.434

Award #: 90TP0046-01-00

Type: Discretionary

Department: US Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This purpose of this contract is to prepare a plan to conduct a formative evaluation of PDG B-5 activities, incorporating results of process evaluations the Contractor will complete for Year 1 activities, and planning for evaluation of activities in future years that may be funded. Outputs/outcomes may include metrics regarding activities completed, numbers served/participating, as well as focus group and survey findings for specific activities. The evaluation plan will address how quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and used to determine how well the activities were implemented, as well as their success. Secondly, the contractor will assist in the development of the application by the state for PDG B-5 continuation funding. This will include developing the logic models for activities that are included in the application.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

PDG B-5 grants were issued to states in order to facilitate collaboration among early childhood care and education (ECE) programs to better serve children and families. The PDB B-5 Funding Opportunity Announcement describes the purpose of the grant as follows:

“In summary, the PDG B-5 grants will support States in their efforts to analyze the current landscape of their ECE mixed delivery system and implement changes to the system that maximize the availability of high-quality early childhood care and education options for low-income and disadvantaged families across providers and partners, improve the quality of care, streamline administrative infrastructure, and improve State-level early childhood care and education funding efficiencies. “  
([https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/files/HHS-2018-ACF-OCC-TP-1379\\_0.pdf](https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/files/HHS-2018-ACF-OCC-TP-1379_0.pdf))

The PDG requires five major activities, and DCDEE has planned for various strategies to implement each one.

1. Conduct a B-5 Needs Assessment to inform the state’s ongoing planning to strengthen the early childhood system.
2. Develop a state Strategic Plan to ensure the state’s early childhood system best meets the needs of young children, especially those who are most vulnerable.
3. Implement family engagement activities to maximize parent knowledge and choice.
4. Implement strategies to share best practices in the areas of universal enrollment, children’s transition from preschool to kindergarten, and in aligning data across ECE programs.
5. Increase access to high quality infant and toddler care through the NC Babies First (NCB1) program.

The PDG also requires each grantee to have a plan for the program performance evaluation (PPE) of the grant funded activities and specifies what must be included in the PPE. The required elements are explained in the Scope of Services below.

### III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The successful applicant will describe how they would develop a detailed plan for the PPE that will address the following criteria. Final evaluation plan decisions will be made in collaboration with DCDEE.

- Build on the proposed PPE design described in the [PDG B-5 grant application](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/departments-initiatives/early-childhood/early-childhood-action-plan), and reflect the vision and goals articulated in NC's Early Childhood Action Plan <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/departments-initiatives/early-childhood/early-childhood-action-plan>.
- Conduct a process evaluation of PDG B-5 activities that were completed in Year 1 of the grant, incorporating initial summative data for short-term outputs and outcomes as feasible and appropriate to determine how well the activities are being implemented, as well as their success. These activities are described in the PDG B-5 grant application referenced above.
- Include strategies for how the PPE design may be refined as needed as the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan are completed and findings available. Consider information from the Needs Assessment to determine whether additional or new data should be collected for the PPE.
- Seek PDG federal technical assistance as needed when finalizing PPE design.
- Determine the appropriate data needed to assess each PDG activity both in Year 1 and in future grant years, and collect all relevant data for each activity that occurred in Year 1.
- Determine how best to obtain data for each activity, e.g., from interviews, focus groups, participant surveys, or similar strategies to fully understand implementation and outcomes of PDG activities. Where possible, plan to utilize existing ECE systems and sources, such as the NC Accounting System (NCAS) for grant expenditures; Qualtrics for programmatic feedback from surveys; NC ECIDS; Child Care Subsidy and Regulatory Systems; CPS and SNAP data; IDEA Parts B and C data; the NC Resource Platform; and data systems of PDG partners such as NCPC and CCR&R agencies.
- Analyze collected data and summarize findings about the successes and struggles in implementing strategies; progress toward meeting goals; lessons learned; costs; and outcomes.
- Make recommendations for PPE design for future years, if future PDG B-5 funds are made available.

- Make recommendations for how objectives, activities, metrics, and deliverables will be included in the PPE for all stages of the evaluation, such as preparation, inception, data collection, analysis, etc.

### **Additional Requirements**

1. **Reports-** Provide data as requested by DCDEE to meet federal reporting requirements. A final report describing the plan for a PPE is due to DCDEE in both hard copy and in an electronic format when the grant ends on 12/30/19, or by the deadline from DCDEE in order to meet any submission date required from the federal funder, whichever is sooner.
2. **Feedback-** Provide feedback to DCDEE and stakeholders as requested throughout the duration of the grant to contribute to continuous quality improvement and monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the PDG project.
3. **Future PDG Application** – Assist the State with writing an application for PDG B-5 continuation funding by designing evaluations for proposed activities. Forecasted date for funding announcement is September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 (Logic models for Maximizing Parental Choice, Sharing Best Practices, and Improving Overall Quality projects are included with this RFP.)

### **IV. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPACITY**

Applicants must demonstrate capacity to obtain and analyze relevant quantitative and qualitative data for PDG activities, have successfully planned for or completed research or evaluations of publicly funded services or programs, and have demonstrated expertise in North Carolina's ECE mixed delivery system. Applicants must be able to work effectively with a variety of ECE stakeholders, including state and local agencies.

Preference will be given to applicants with extensive knowledge of the NC Early Childhood Action Plan.

Applicants must detail the qualifications of key personnel to plan for research and evaluation needed for this project.

The following organizations are eligible for funding under this Application:

1. Public Entities
2. Private Non-Profit Organizations
3. State Agencies
4. Universities

## V. LINE ITEM BUDGET & NARRATIVE

Applicants must submit a line item budget for September – December in calendar year 2019 and a narrative for all expenses. A narrative justification must be included for every expense listed in the budget. Each justification should show how the amount on the line item budget was calculated, and it should be clear how the expense relates to the project's activities. A budget template is included with this RFA.

### **Travel Reimbursement Rates**

Mileage reimbursement rates must be based on rates determined by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM). Because mileage rates fluctuate with the price of fuel, the OSBM will release the "Change in IRS Mileage Rate" memorandum to be found on OSBM's website when there is a change in this rate. The state mileage reimbursement rate as of 1/01/19 is \$0.58 cents per mile.

For other travel related expenses, please refer to the current rates for travel and lodging reimbursement, presented in the chart below. However, please be advised that reimbursement rates periodically change. DCDEE will only reimburse for rates authorized in OSBM's North Carolina Budget Manual or adopted by means of an OSBM Budget Memo. These documents are located here: <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/library>

### **Current Rates for Travel and Lodging**

<b>Meals</b>	<b>In State</b>	<b>Out of State</b>
Breakfast	\$ 8.60	\$8.60
Lunch	\$11.30	\$11.30
Dinner	\$19.50	\$22.20
<i>Total Meals Per Diem Per Day</i>	<i>\$39.40</i>	<i>\$42.10</i>
<b>Lodging</b> ( <i>Maximum rate per person, excludes taxes and fees</i> )	\$75.10	\$88.70
<b>Total Travel Allowance Per Day</b>	<b>\$114.50</b>	<b>\$130.80</b>
Mileage	\$0.58 cents per mile	

### **Indirect Cost Rate – 10%**

Indirect cost is the cost incurred for common or joint objectives which cannot be readily identified but are necessary to the operations of the organization, e.g., the cost of operating and maintaining facilities, depreciation, and administrative salaries. **Indirect cost should be calculated at no more than 10% for this proposal, unless the applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. DCDEE may seek to negotiate indirect cost with the applicant.**

## **VI. APPLICATION CONTENT & FORMAT**

The submitted electronic application must be formatted to print on 8.5 x 11-inch paper with margins of 1 inch, except for the spreadsheets used in the budget template. Line spacing should be single-spaced. Use Calibri or Times New Roman font **only** no smaller than an 11-point font. All proposals must include the following (*\* indicates form posted with the RFA notice*).

- 1) **Application Checklist\*** - Summarizes the application components to be submitted
- 2) **Application Face Sheet\*** - Requires electronic or scanned signature of authorized authority
- 3) **Proposal Summary:** Provide a brief (3-5 paragraphs) description of the applicant's proposal to implement planning for the PPE.
- 4) **Introduction to the Applicant Organization/Applicant Qualifications:**  
Provide a 1-3-page introduction to the applicant's organization, including:
  - The organization's mission, history, and goals
  - Qualifications, experience, and expertise of key personnel to be assigned to this initiative.
  - Organization's experience in the content area specified in the application
- 5) **Proposal Design, Time Line & Strategies:** Provide a 5-7-page narrative describing the proposed plan for design of the PPE and the activities/tasks that will be accomplished with the available resources as described in Section III. Include as part of scope of services the major tasks, deliverables, and anticipated dates of completion. Identify the key personnel responsible for each task, by position.
- 6) **Collaborative Partners or Subcontractors:** Identify any collaborative partners or subcontractors you plan to work with to implement a plan for the PPE. Include partner or subcontractor name, address, and nonprofit or for-profit status. Explain the contributions each partner or subcontractor will make toward the initiative, including resources. Attach copies of support letters from collaborative partners or subcontractors, if applicable.
- 7) **Line Item Budget\*, Detailed Budget Narrative, and FTE Sheet\*:** Complete and submit a proposed line item budget according to the format provided with this RFA, within the total budget allotted. Also complete a proposed budget narrative that explains in detail all line items in the budget worksheet in accordance with the "DCDEE Line Item Budget & Narrative Instructions." The FTE worksheet is also required as part of this RFA. Please complete the FTE sheet first so that the line item budget will populate Salary/Fringe values in Column C. Budgets, budget narratives and FTE sheets must be submitted for calendar year 2019.

## **VII. SELECTION PROCESS**

The following is a general description of the process for selecting applications for funding for this initiative. A selection committee chosen by DCDEE will review each application submitted. Upon



review of each application the selection committee will assign a numerical rating based on the following:

- 1) **Proposal Summary** (Maximum of **10** points):  
Response must reflect the applicant's understanding of and responsiveness to the Scope of Services described in Section III.
- 2) **Applicant Organization(s)/Applicant Qualifications/Partners** (Maximum of **20** points):  
Response must reflect the applicant's history of and capacity for successful completion or planning for research or evaluations of publicly funded services or programs; capacity to obtain and analyze relevant quantitative and qualitative data for PDG activities; as well as demonstrated expertise of North Carolina's ECE mixed delivery system and ability to work effectively with a variety of ECE stakeholders. Collaborative partners or subcontractors, if used, should be qualified and have the capacity to provide the services specified.
- 3) **Proposal Design, Time Line & Strategies** (Maximum of **35** points):  
Response must reflect how the proposal will allow for the PPE design and methodology to contribute to continuous quality improvement and monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the PDG project. The criteria in Section III must be addressed. Include a timeline of deliverables for the 2019 calendar year that will support completion of the PPE plan by 12/30/19.
- 4) **Alignment with Early Childhood Action Plan:** (Maximum of **15** points):  
Plan must reflect how the PPE design will align with the NC Early Childhood Action Plan.
- 5) **Line Item Budget\*, Detailed Budget Narrative and FTE Sheet\*:** (Maximum of **20** points):  
Budget must reflect efficient and effective use of financial resources. The proposal must follow all stipulations included in the budget worksheet and narrative instructions. The plan must provide a clear and reasonable justification for all proposed expenditures. The funding period will be for approximately 4 months within calendar year 2019.

**Maximum Points: 100**

Any attachments must further demonstrate the applicant's capacity to fulfill the requirements for this evaluation as described. The selection committee will submit recommendations to DCDEE based on the selection process described. The Division will make a final selection and notify all applicants of that selection in writing and/or electronically **no later than 5:00 pm on August 21, 2019.**

**VIII. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this RFA. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted to DCDEE's website (<http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/>) by **July 24, 2019.**
2. **An electronic submission** of the application must be received from each agency or

organization. The submission must include an application face sheet with an electronic or scanned signature by an official authorized to bind the agency or organization in a legal contract.

3. All applications must be received by DCDEE via email not later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. **Paper copies or faxed applications will not be accepted.**
4. The date and time of application receipt will be documented by the date and time shown on the email submission received via [DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov). Budgets and budget narratives are to be included as part of the application submitted.
5. At their option, the RFA evaluation team may request additional information from any or all applicants for clarification or to support the materials presented in any part of the application. However, agencies and organizations are cautioned that the evaluation team is not required to request clarification; therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the agency or organization.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, and applicant's documented experience with similar projects, apparent ability of the agencies or organization's staff and cost. The award of a grant to one agency and organization does not mean that the other applications lacked merit but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.
7. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
8. **Application Process Summary Dates**  
07/10/2019: Request for Applications issued  
07/17/2019: End of Q&A period. All questions due via email no later than 5 pm.  
07/24/2019: Answers to Questions posted to the DCDEE website no later than 5 pm.  
**08/14/2019: Applications must be received via email no later than 5 pm.**  
**08/21/2019: Successful applicant will be notified.**  
TBD: Contract estimated to begin in September during calendar year 2019.

## **IX. General Information on Submitting Applications**

1. **Award or Rejection**  
All complete and timely submitted applications will be evaluated and awards will be made to that agencies or organizations whose combination of budget and service capabilities are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. The successful applicant will be notified by **August 21, 2019**.

2. **Cost of Application Preparation**  
Any cost incurred by an agency or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the agency or organization's sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any agency or organization for any pre-award costs incurred.
3. **Elaborate Applications**  
Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond what is necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired.
4. **Oral Explanations**  
The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding the grant.
5. **Reference to Other Data**  
Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not be considered.
6. **Titles**  
Titles and headings in this RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.
7. **Form of Application**  
Each application must be submitted utilizing the forms provided by DCDEE, and upon award, these forms will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).
8. **Exceptions**  
All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and conditions by any agency or organization may be grounds for rejection of that agency or organization's application.
9. **Advertising**  
In submitting its application, agencies and organizations agree not to use the results of the selection process as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of DCDEE.
10. **Right to Submitted Material**  
All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the agency or organization will become the property of the funding agency when received.
11. **Competitive Offer**  
Pursuant to the provision of N.C.G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application

has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.

12. **Agency and Organization's Representative**

Each agency or organization shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions regarding the application.

13. **Subcontracting**

Agencies and organizations may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their applications clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom.

14. **Proprietary Information**

Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the agency or organization does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.

15. **Participation Encouraged**

Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Applications.

16. **Gifts Ban**

N.C.G.S. 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to or acceptance by any State Employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response to this request, agencies and organizations attest, for the entire organization and its employees or agents, that no such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of the organization.

17. **Contract/Funds Disbursement**

DCDEE will issue a contract to the recipients of the grant that will include their application. Expenditures may begin upon receipt of a fully executed contract and not before that point. To receive compensation, following contract submission and agreement, the selected applicants must submit a monthly reimbursement request to the Division for all expenses incurred.

18. **Audit**

Please be advised that successful applicants may be required to have an audit in

accordance with N.C.G.S. 143C-6-22 and N.C.G.S. 143C-6-23 as applicable to the agency's status.

There are 3 reporting levels which are determined by the total direct grant receipts from all State agencies in the entity's fiscal year:

Level 1: Less than \$25,000

Level 2: At least \$25,000 but less than \$500,000

Level 3: \$500,000 or more. Level 3 grantees are required to submit a "Yellow Book" audit done by a CPA.

Only Level 3 grantees may include audit expenses on the budget. Audit expenses should be prorated based on the ratio of the grant to the total pass-through funds received by the entity.

**19. Additional Documentation to Include with Application**

All applicants are required to include documentation of their tax identification number. Those applicants which are private nonprofit agencies are to include a copy of an IRS determination letter regarding the agency's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. (This letter normally includes the agency's tax identification number, so it would also satisfy that documentation requirement.)

**20. Federal Certifications**

Agencies or organizations receiving federal funds are required to execute Federal certifications regarding non-discrimination, Drug-Free Workplace, Environmental Tobacco Smoke, Debarment, Lobbying, and Lobbying Activities.

**21. System for Award Management Database (SAM)**

All grantees receiving federal funds must be actively registered in the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) database, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the award (see [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)). To maintain an active SAM record, the record must be updated no less than annually.

**22. Additional Documentation Prior to Contract Execution**

Contracts will require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:

- a. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign contracts.
- b. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign expenditure reports.
- c. Documentation of the agency's DUNS number. Documentation consists of a copy of communication (such as a letter or email correspondence) from Dun &

Bradstreet (D&B) which indicates the agency or organization's legal name, address, and DUNS number. In lieu of a document from D&B, a copy of the agency or organization's SAM record is acceptable.

- d. If your agency does not have a DUNS number, please use the D&B online registration (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) to receive one free of charge. (DUNS is the acronym for the Data Universal Numbering System developed and regulated by D&B.)
- e. Contracts with private non-profit agencies require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, private non-profit agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:
  - i. A completed, signed, and notarized statement which includes the agency's Conflict of Interest Policy.
  - ii. A completed, signed, and notarized page certifying that the agency has no overdue tax debts.
- f. All grantees receiving funds through the State of North Carolina are required to execute Contractor Certifications Required by North Carolina Law. Contractor Certifications should **NOT** be generated, signed or returned with application.

**Note:** At the start of each calendar year, all agencies with current DCDEE contracts are required to update their contract documentation. These agencies will be contacted a few weeks prior to the due date and will be provided the necessary forms and instructions.

**23. Registration with Secretary of State**

Private non-profit applicants must also be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to do business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents. (See [www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations](http://www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations).)

**24. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)  
Data Reporting Requirement**

The Contractor shall complete and submit to the Division, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement form within 10 State Business Days when awarded \$25,000 or more in federal funds.

**25. Salary Limitation**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive

Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$189,600. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.